Ludlow, where the facilities for making gas are much less than at Bridgnorth.——The parish church of Chippenham has been lighted with gas, repewed, and the floor levelled and repaved. The new pews are low and open, but some of the sitters have been allowed to add doors to them.——The operative bricklayers at the borough jail and asylum, Birmingham, have been adopting resolutions to procure a settlement of the dispute pending between Mr. Pashby and Mr. Hardwicke and their workmen. The resolutions, however, charge these gentlemen with injustice, oppression, and violation of faith, and are therefore not very likely, we should fear, of meeting with such a reception as to "procure a settlement of the dispute."——The new church of St. Luke, at Eccleshill, was consecrated on Tuesday week. It is in the perpendicular style of the 14th century, with a steeple and spire. It is fitted up with galleries, and will accommodate 820 persons, one-half free. The site was given by Mr. George Baron, and 1,000*l.* of its cost of 2,650*l.* were given by her Majesty's Commissioners for building churches, the remainder being raised by subscription. Mr. W. Rawstorne, of Bradford, was the architect.——The *Bradford Observer* also notices the consecration of the church of St. John the Baptist at Baildon, recently rebuilt in the style of the 13th century, with a nave, chancel, and south aisle, and of larger dimensions than formerly. It measures 66 feet by 40, and accommodates 500, with gallery at the west end—280 sittings free. The cost of rebuilding is estimated to be about 1,000*l.* Messrs. Mallinson and Healey, of Bradford, were the architects.——The Hull council have resolved to raise 12,000*l.* for the erection of baths and washhouses, on the plans of the model establishment in Goulston-square, Whitechapel.——Operations are in progress for the removal of a portion of the massive sea wall of the northern boundary of the wet docks, Leith, preparatory to the commencement of the new dock for steam vessels. A Bill passed last session of Parliament authorised the construction of extensive works, at the estimated cost of 135,000*l.*

POETRY AS A PRINCIPLE IN ART.

At the Decorative Art Society, March 9th, Mr. Dennys read a paper "On Poetry, considered as the life-giving principle of the Arts." After attempting to define poetry, the writer argued that the manifestations of poetry are not confined to language, and that no work of art can become immortal (in human phrase), which is not vitalized by a poetic mind. That a great painter is a great poet, as also are great sculptors, architects, and musical composers. That human labour, to have a prolonged existence, must have a portion of the worker's soul transfused into the work, which, if great in its aims, and noble in its character, like Angelo's "Last Judgment," or Milton's "Paradise Lost," or Shakspeare's "Othello" and "Macbeth," will then take its place with the "Iliad" of Homer, the Phidian marbles, or the three orders of architecture; and that all things purporting to be works of art, but lacking the life-giving energy of poetic feeling, soon die and are forgotten.

It was remarked that with few exceptions, scarcely a single modern work in the exhibition rooms of last year would enjoy even a British reputation for half a century. They were either odes and sonnets of a timorous muse, or humble imitations of *higher fancies*, but having no vitality of their own. The spirit of poetic truth,—the elixir of existence in the Laocoon and the Niobe of the Greeks,—was not to be seen there. References were then made to the Portland vase, the bronze gates by Ghiberti, and cups by Cellini, to illustrate the argument that it matters not in what *material* men work when actuated by the spirit of beauty, as born of imagination, and nurtured by an entire devotion of the mind to its work, and which is called genius; and further, that this all-vivifying spirit is poetry. The writer then, in order to shew the mode in which poetry is manifested, described it as consisting in a *beautiful thought*, but necessarily requiring mechanical and builder-like contrivance to constitute it a work of art; and he proceeded to urge that the power, firstly, to imagine, and then to construct, an "Iliad," or "Paul preaching at Athens," is of necessity rare, and also that even with much imagination, a lively fancy, but without an all-absorbing devotion, a concentration of thought and purpose, and a masterly builder-like mind to arrange and dispose of each part so as to make a consistent whole, no man can become a truly great artist.

It was then stated, that the power to perceive and appreciate beauties, which we are not competent to express, has been given to make us wiser and better; and that the use of it in Shakespeare, Mozart, and Angelo, is in enabling them to assist the perceptions of the dull and unimaginative, and that the purposes of art, when rightly directed, work upon grosser minds, and excite a feeling for the beautiful and its train of happy consequences. That all the world is full of poetry, all nature teems with it, and more of it is imprisoned in the pregnant hearts of the multitude than even the tuneful muse gave utterance to; and that it is thus every new beauty which genius unveils, wears the similitude of something not *altogether new*, something dimly and indistinctly seen before. To the susceptible and beauty-loving mind of the young and innocent, it was observed, every object in nature has its phases of beauty.

Mr. Dennys then proceeded to examine the operations of music, painting, and sculpture, upon the mind; and he mentioned, first, Luther's Hymn, as sung by Braham, and accompanied by Harper on the trumpet, which he said might awaken thoughts, emotions, and aspirations which belong to another and more exalted existence. This he maintained to be the musician's *beautiful thought*, and that is poetry.

It was remarked that, "happily for mankind, the institutions which starve and degrade the body, cannot entirely pauperise the mind, and that man's spirit will note, converse with the unseen, and that the eternal beauties of the creation smiling upon the heart even of the shackled slave, will generate within him that sunshine of the soul which, whether uttered or only felt, is poetry. This it is which sweetens the never-ceasing toil of the ploughman and "swart artisan."

The biography of Michaelangelo afforded Mr. Dennys much matter in supporting the practical relations of his argument, "that the essential principle of all the arts is the same," and he dwelt upon Angelo's qualifications as an artist, at greater length, in order, as he said, that a better understanding might be arrived at, respecting the loads of vapid sentimentality and trash annually exposed to the public, as works of art, at "a shilling a head, and catalogues a shilling;" the latter commodity, he said, is supposed to be a guide to the meaning (and much they require such a guide), and an index to the poetry of the pictures, portraits, miniatures, busts, and statues. Sometimes, it is true, we meet with a little poetry in the catalogues, but rarely ever in the pictures. The social facts which, he supposed, give rise to this state of art in this country, was adverted to, and it was said, that society, having departed from truth, so must the artist. The public are pleased with trifles, and art sinks into a manufacture of those trifles, and supplies them. Society pays with cheerfulness — it knows that the bauble will pass for a gem.

The writer then observed, that the manners, habits, and feelings of a people must determine the character of the arts. He dwelt upon the solemn grandeur of our Gothic cathedrals, as being the works of architects, whose earnest devotion and truly poetic enthusiasm are there so incomparably well expressed, that it is scarcely possible to enter one of these temples unoppressed with awe. He contended that society in general is now unfavourably constituted for the production of such great works of art; that it wears a mask, and is not what it seems to be. Men are not content to be their simple selves, but are imitators and copyists, and the state of art is a reflex and exponent of such conditions.

MONUMENT TO THE LATE MR. WALTER.—Arrangements are in progress for raising, by subscription, a monument to the late Mr. John Walter, of the *Times*, "to do honour to his memory; to stimulate others to a similar career of enlightened enterprize; and to originate an act of public respect and gratitude to the press of our country."

THE NEW THEATRE AT THE ROYAL POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTION.

THE Polytechnic Institution in Regent-street has lately undergone very considerable enlargement, by the erection of a theatre for optical exhibitions and other similar purposes. The full attendance of the public to witness the interesting development of the hydro-electrical microscope, physioscope, and dissolving views, rendered it desirable to provide both larger accommodation, and for giving a still wider range to the lenses and other instruments. For this purpose an excellent theatre has been built, under the direction of Mr. James Thomson, architect, nearly 120 feet in length and 40 feet in width, clear of the walls, with an altitude of 50 feet between floor and ceiling, which appears to be admirably adapted for its purpose, and reflects great credit on the skill of the architect.

In its general character and construction it may be thus described:—the internal walls have massive piers and arches rising to the height of about 30 feet, from the key-stones of which spring metal cantilevers, for supporting galleries, the whole length of the building; from these, as a podium, the wall rises some 6 or 7 feet, and from thence springs the elliptic-coved ceiling, formed of large iron girders, of which the rise is 13 feet, and the length 50 feet. These girders are in one casting, from the house of Messrs. Bramah and Robinson, of Pimlico, and are amongst the largest, in point of span, that have been executed: they were all previously proved as to their soundness by the hydraulic press, and are good specimens of the ability of the firm in question. These girders rest on York-stone templets, and the feet of them are hollow, as a means of providing ample water-way;—they are of the ordinary section, with flanches at top and bottom, having iron shoes to receive the wood purlins which support the arched ribs that serve both for the boarding of the roof and the internal plastering.

The covering is of marine metal (Baron Wetterstedt's patent). The previous gallery of this institution was covered with the same metal about ten years ago, and it was found to answer so satisfactorily as to be again adopted.

On the summit of the roof is a skylight 50 feet in length and 12 feet broad; this is provided with two moveable shutters, or blinds, each 25 feet long, having a series of iron rollers 12 inches diameter, running upon a tramway, and moved by a cogged-wheel and vertical shaft, so as instantly to close that large opening by the simultaneous movement of the two shutters from opposite ends—this is for the purpose of exhibiting the optical illusions in broad day, and in an instant to restore the light again for the general promenade of the public. The shutters were executed by Messrs. Barron and Turner.

The seats consist of two inclined planes: one, which we will call the pit, descends from the level of the old gallery floor to the floor of the theatre, and the other ascends at the old gallery level, and rises gradually to the very top of the side walls. Each of them is supported by a strong frame-work of timber, consisting, both longitudinally and transversely, of a series of principals, queen posts and braces, the whole resting on strong cast-iron columns, having stone plinths and brick piers brought up from the basement. Beneath this upper range of seats and the lower one is a large room, 40 feet by 33 feet, and of a height varying from 10 feet to 30 feet; in this, which is called the Manipulating-room, are placed all the apparatus of the optical and mathematical instruments, by which the objects are produced on the disc.

The disc alone is an object of considerable interest: it is the largest plane constructed of wood, and rendered moveable, that we have ever seen, being 33 feet by 27 feet in area, nearly 900 feet super. It consists of a crane-like construction, upon which is framed a series of horizontal and vertical braces, and the whole is covered with boarding and oil canvass. This was constructed by Mr. Strachan, the able stage machinist, and whose contrivance to stretch the canvass in case it should get slack by change of temperature, is both simple and effective. This immense screen is made to move upon a centre so easily, that no machinery

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